

Second, be optimistic and be grateful. Some bad things are going to happen to you—to some of you, unfair things, perhaps even tragic things. Some of you have faced tragedy already. When these things happen, try to remember that each new day is still a gift, full of the mystery and magic of life. Try not to waste even one of those days trapped by hatred, the desire to get even, self-pity, despair, or cynicism.

We all give in to them now and then, of course, but you need to work at snapping out of it and going on. Hatred and self-pity give victory to the very dark forces we deplore. Despair guarantees defeat. Cynicism is a cowardly cop-out. And no ever really gets even in life; that is God's work.

No matter how bad it gets, don't forget there's someone who's endured more pain than you have. No matter how unfair it gets, remember that most of us are far better off than we would be if we only got what we deserve. And don't stop at admiring a Mandela or a Cardinal Bernardin. Strive to be more like them. Keep your spirits up. There is profound truth in the proverb, "A happy heart maketh good medicine, but a broken spirit dryeth the bones."

Third, be of service to others. Much has been given to you already, and a lot more is coming your way. You owe it to yourself to give something back, to help to build a society and a world in which more people have your chance to live out their dreams, and all people in need at least know the touch of a caring hand and the embrace of a kind heart. From your service here, many of you already know that it not only gives more joy to others, it will bring more joy to you than you can even imagine.

Fourth, be both humble and proud. Be humble because you're human, subject to error and frailty, incapable, no matter how intelligent you are, of ever knowing the whole truth. Show mercy as well as judgment to those with whom you disagree in life. Keep in mind Benjamin Franklin's adage that even our enemies are our friends, for they show us our faults.

Be proud because your life is God's unique creation, worthy of its journey, graced with a soul the equal of every other person's. Eleanor Roosevelt once said that no one can make

you feel inferior without your permission. Do not give them permission.

I regret that in our time, the essential role of constructive criticism often degenerates into what Deborah Tannen has called "the culture of critique," where too many brilliant minds and prodigious energies are spent simply putting people down. Do not be put down.

Thirty-seven years ago, I was a student in Vernon Dokey's eighth grade science class. On first impression, Vernon Dokey, to put it charitably, was a very physically unattractive man. [*Laughter*] He knew it. He laughed about it. And he used it to teach us a valuable lesson in life I still remember. He told us that every morning when he woke up, he went to the bathroom and he shaved, and then he looked at himself in the mirror and he said, "Vernon, you're beautiful." [*Laughter*]

Well, Class of '97, you're beautiful. Go out and live like it. Be humble and be proud. Be of service. Be optimistic and grateful. Be brave, and dream your dreams.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. in the gymnasium at the Sidwell Friends School. In his remarks, he referred to Ralph Bryant, chairman, board of directors, Earl Harrison, head of school, and Bernard Noe, upper school principal, Sidwell Friends School.

Statement on the National Economy June 6, 1997

Four years ago, we put in place an economic strategy that has helped give America the strongest economy in the world. That strategy had three critical components: cutting the budget deficit; making smart investments in education, the environment, and our children; and opening new markets through tough trade agreements.

Today we received one more piece of solid evidence that this invest-and-grow strategy is working. We learned that our economy added 138,000 new jobs and that unemployment dropped to 4.8 percent, the lowest in 24 years. The American economy has now added 12.3 million new jobs since I took office, and unemployment has now been below

6 percent for almost 3 years. America's economy is the strongest it has been in a generation.

Now we must press forward with the economic strategy that we adopted in 1993 and that has helped create the conditions for sustained growth. The balanced budget agreement I reached with leaders of Congress embodies our strategy. It is a balanced budget that is in balance with our values, and yesterday's strong endorsement of it by the House and Senate ratifies that economic strategy. This bipartisan action is a hopeful sign that both parties can work together to keep our economy growing. I look forward to working with leaders of both parties to write our balanced budget plan into law.

The progress of the balanced budget shows what America can accomplish when we reach across party lines and work together. Unfortunately, the Republican leaders of Congress have chosen the path of partisanship and confrontation in their actions on the disaster relief bill. Because congressional leaders chose to attach unacceptable political items to vital disaster relief legislation, I have no choice but to veto that measure. Once again, I call on the Congress to honor the sacrifice and aid the recovery of the families in the Dakotas, Minnesota, and across the country by passing straightforward disaster relief legislation and sending it to my desk.

Proclamation 7009—Flag Day and National Flag Week, 1997

June 6, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Our Nation's flag has always flown in the vanguard of the American journey, reminding us of our proud past and beckoning us into a future full of promise. Its bold colors reflect the courage and exuberance of the American people, and its simple but inspired design symbolizes both the unity and diversity that define our Nation.

Adopted by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777, the Stars and Stripes became the official flag of the young United States

and a compelling symbol of our new independence. Woven into its folds were the hopes, dreams, and determination of the extraordinary individuals who founded this country—hopes for a system of government that would honor the rights and dignity of every citizen; dreams that their great experiment in democracy would succeed; and determination to ensure that success, even at the cost of their own lives. Since that time, generations of Americans have invested the flag with their own hopes and dreams. Millions of immigrants, traveling to these shores to flee poverty or oppression, have rejoiced at their first glimpse of the American flag, confident that its promise of freedom, equality, and opportunity would prove true for them and their families.

We have carried Old Glory to places undreamed of by our founders, from the depths of Earth's oceans to the Sea of Tranquility on the Moon. Through conflict and in peace, on missions of exploration and on missions of mercy, the flag has led us wherever our questing spirits have been willing to venture, and whenever America's freedom, security, and values have been threatened.

On Flag Day and during National Flag Week, I encourage all Americans to join me in reflecting on the proud history and profound meaning of our flag. And let us pledge to keep faith with those generations of patriots, both military and civilian, who gave their lives to keep the flag flying over a Nation that is free, strong, and true to our highest ideals.

To commemorate the adoption of our flag, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 3, 1949 (63 Stat. 492), designated June 14 of each year as "Flag Day" and requested the President to issue an annual proclamation calling for its observance and for the display of the Flag of the United States on all Federal Government buildings. The Congress also requested the President, by joint resolution approved June 9, 1966 (80 Stat. 194), to issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as "National Flag Week" and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,
President of the United States of America,